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Central Intelligence Bulletin

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*Vietnam: (Information as of 4:30 AM EST)

Military Developments in South Vietnam: The Viet Cong terrorist attacks on military installations in Saigon this weekend killed three US soldiers, damaged several aircraft, and gutted a building used by a US Army Psychological Operations Group.

At the army group's facility in downtown Saigon, nine US servicemen were wounded when a bomb was exploded under the building's metal roof. A mortar attack on Tan Son Nhut air base damaged 11 US aircraft and, in addition to causing the three deaths, wounded 29 military personnel. The Viet Cong lost 18 killed and six captured of an estimated 30-man infiltration team. (Map)

North Vietnamese Political Developments: DRV propaganda throughout the weekend continued its protest of the 2 December air raid in the Hanoi area.

The usual ICC and Foreign Ministry protests were accompanied this time by mass rallies, press conferences, and a tour of some of the bombed-out areas by foreign newsmen within three hours of the raids. At one news conference, the North Vietnamese displayed one of the US pilots who had just been downed north of the capital, and they claimed that the raids had killed a total of 26 persons--presumably civilians.

The AFP correspondent's on-the-scene dispatches portrayed the North Vietnamese reaction to the bombings as "valiant, quick, and efficient." He claimed that manpower crews and bulldozers had already started to fill in craters and restore rail and telephone service when the correspondents began their tour. The newsmen apparently were not shown any of the militarily significant targets.

(continued)

Political Developments in South Vietnam: The Constituent Assembly has heard proposals from its subcommittees that the future government consist of four equal branches--an executive, a bicameral legislature, a judiciary, and an inspectorate.

The recommendations, however, represent the preliminary views of the committees and there will be further discussions on the floor of the assembly before final action is taken on the form of the government. The deputies who presented the suggestions were generally critical of past and present methods of administering the country. One of them came down particularly hard on the current system in which corps commanders have an excess of power and provincial officials have little control over local affairs. As a result, he stated, the government is not responsive to local and regional needs. [redacted]

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Panama: A new anti-US campaign is in the works.

Panama's sensationalist news media have been giving heavy coverage to a Panamanian pilot's allegations that on 1 December US Army personnel threatened and detained him and searched his transport aircraft after he made an emergency landing at Rio Hato, a US training area in the republic.

News stories also falsely claim that Foreign Minister Eleta has made a verbal protest to the US ambassador over the violation of "Panamanian sovereignty." Ultranationalists in the National Assembly have seized on the incident to demand that the government submit a full report to the legislative assembly.

Much of the news commentary comes from media owned or controlled by the oligarchy, which has frequently used this means to stir nationalistic sentiment against the US presence in Panama. The sensitive base rights and status of forces issue has been a key point in the long drawn out negotiations to conclude a new US-Panama treaty to replace the 1903 convention.

The Panamanian foreign minister is scheduled to appear before the assembly tomorrow to report on the airplane incident and sometime before 20 September on the canal treaty talks.

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Dominican Republic: A power struggle involving Balaguer's military aide is developing in the Dominican Republic.

The aide, Col. Nivar, has been attempting to gain control over the military, police, and the internal security service for several months. He is presently spreading thus far unsubstantiated reports of antigovernment plotting by Antonio Imbert and disgruntled military officers in what appears to be an effort to increase his influence over the military. The President, who fears an assassination attempt, has ordered that evidence be obtained in order to take action against the plotters.

The US country team warns that the President's concern could lead to his making a dramatic move against the alleged plotters or abrupt personnel shifts in the government. If the President should take such actions, they would strengthen Nivar's position and might bring a defensive reaction from Imbert or those military figures whom Nivar is attempting to discredit. President Balaguer also might lose the support of military officers who have been loyal to him heretofore.

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Ecuador: Military leaders seem to have accepted the constituent assembly's action censuring members of the former junta.

On 2 December the assembly approved a motion by former president Carlos Arosemena--who was deposed by the junta in July 1963--which suspended the junta members' citizenship rights for three years. Arosemena's original motion had called for "loss" rather than "suspension" of these rights, and the revised wording has made the action more palatable to the military.

Promotions, pay, and other issues vital to the military's self-respect have not been threatened.

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Jordan-Egypt-Syria: An upcoming meeting of the Arab Defense Council promises to be a forum for further recriminatory exchanges between Jordan and Egypt over defense policies against Israel.

The meeting is scheduled for 7 December in Cairo, but Jordan has asked for a postponement pending the return of Jordanian Army Chief of Staff Khammash from his current military aid mission to the US.

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Macao - Communist China: Local pro-Communist elements in Macao have exploited an incident arising from a long-standing issue to extract concessions from the new Portuguese governor of the colony.

The Communist effort was sparked by clashes on 15 November between police and workers who were demolishing buildings without a government permit. The demolition was being undertaken in order to construct a Communist-run school for which a permit had been pending for more than a year.

Apparently intimidated by violent demonstrations and riots during the past week, the governor has suspended the deputy chief of police and the district officer of Taipa Island, where the original incident occurred. The unofficial Chinese Communist representative in Macao had demanded that both officials be dismissed, and that the governor apologize for using force.

Peking supported these and other demands made on the Macao Government with a broadcast on 1 December charging that the incident had been "deliberately planned" by the authorities. It is not clear whether the Communists will be satisfied with the governor's capitulation. The success already achieved by their pressure tactics may encourage them to make new demands.

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NOTES

Lebanon: Prime Minister Yafi's resignation on 2 December resulted from growing personal conflicts within the cabinet and Parliament. Former prime minister Karami, one of Yafi's leading critics who has a substantial following in Parliament, is the logical politician to be asked to form a new cabinet. Karami, a somewhat less moderate Arab nationalist than Yafi, reportedly is being encouraged by former president Shihab and the army to assume leadership of the government again.

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